DEMOCRATIC
GERMAN REPORT

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PRICES NOSE-DIVE

Big Cuts for Customers in East Germany

The biggest-ever price cut went into effect in East Germany on June 4th. The price cut, seventeenth since 1949, slashed prices of textiles, household equipment, radios, bicycles, and thousands of other items by as much as 60%.

The big all-round reduction will save consumers one thousand million marks by the end of the year, it was officially calculated. This means, for an average family of four persons, a monthly saving of 33 marks: enough to take the whole family to the cinema twice a week.

On Monday morning, June 4th, big crowds of buyers thronged the clothing stores to take quick advantage of the reductions in the prices of textiles: women's dresses and coats which had previously cost 100 marks were marked down to 40 marks in some cases. The reductions were not so big in the case of high-grade imported textiles, but even here articles which had previously cost 100 marks were now reduced to 60 or 70 marks.

Mothers were particularly pleased by the 35% all-round reduction in children's clothing, and the 25% reduction in children's shoes.

Details of the Reductions

Here is a selection of the old prices and the new prices for a number of articles taken at random:

Girl's dress: old price 24.80, new price 16.10

Winter coat: old price 55.20, new price 35.90

Perlon stockings (like nylon): old price 14.85, new price 11.90.

Children's shoes: old price 17.40, new price 14.35.

Men's interlock underwear: old price 18.70, new price 12.95.

Bicycle: old price 261, new price 210.

Vacuum cleaner: old price 322, new price 269.

Car radio: old price 473, new price 195.

Contax 1:2.8 camera: old price 793, new price 586.

Portable typewriter: old price 340, new price 218.

Refrigerator: old price 1050, new price 840.

Announcing the new price cuts, Deputy Prime Minister Fred Oelssner stated:

"As a result of the success of the first Five Year Plan, particularly in the field of machine production, the output of consumer goods has increased very rapidly lately. As a result of the steady rise in productivity, the increase in production, and the reduction of costs, it has become possible for the Government to cut the retail price of a whole series of industrial products."

Deputy Prime Minister Oelssner then gave details of the reductions, and continued:

"The great importance of the new price reductions can best be seen when compared with the development of price in West Germany. Although production has increased considerably there, this has not produced any price reductions. On the contrary, prices in West Germany are going up all the time. The West German trade unions have stressed again and again that prices are mounting faster than wages, and that real wages are thus on the decline.

"New price increases have already been announced for various manufactured goods, and textiles for instance will get at least five percent more expensive in West Germany in the next few months."

Campers Make Foreign Trips

Thousands of young men and women from the German Democratic Republic will be able to take camping holidays in Czechoslovakia, Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria and the Soviet Union this summer, it was announced in Berlin.

Some groups will go on foot, others by motor-cycle, and others by canoe.

Since the possibilities for foreign travel are still limited, first chance for the journeys abroad will be given to young people who have done particularly well in their factories or schools. Groups of young workers and students from the countries named will make similar tours in the German Democratic Republic.

DEMOCRATIC GERMANY RELEASES MANY THOUSAND PRISONERS

Stabilisation Makes Step Possible

The German Democratic Republic has already released "several thousand" prisoners as a contribution to the relaxation of tension in Germany, Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl announced in the People's Chamber on May 29th. Further releases were still taking place, and final figures could not yet be given, the Prime Minister stated.

It had been possible to release these prisoners because the internal und external stabilisation of the German Democratic Republic meant that they were no longer a danger to the Republic, Otto Grotewohl said. He stressed that all of these persons had been found guilty of breaches of the laws of the German Democratic Republic.

"The Government of the German Democratic Republic intends to take every step possible which could lead to an understanding between the two German states" the Prime Minister stated. "But the release of convicted prisoners is not something to be bargained about. The rapprochement between the two German states cannot be made dependent upon the release of elements who tried to disrupt the peaceful building of the workers' and peasants' state, or who worked for foreign or West German spy agencies.

"Everyone knows how the western capitalist press, particularly the West German press, conducts an uninterrupted campaign against the legal system of the German Democratic Republic. These papers are always shouting that there is a bloody reign of terror in the German Democratic Republic, that nobody is safe from arrest, and so on.

"I should like to present you with some statistics, which may help to enlighten these slanderers.

"In 1932, the last year of the Weimar Republic, a total of 0.86 % of the population received court sentences for crimes or misdemeanours.

"Comparative figures for the German Democratic Republic are as follows:

In 1953, 0.78 % of the population were sentenced.

In 1954, 0.71 % of the population were sentenced.

In 1955, 0.60 % of the population were sentenced.

"In West Germany, however, the percentage sentenced has risen from the 0.86 % of Weimar times to the figure of 3% today.

"The contrast is even more remarkable when we compare the figures in East and West Germany since 1949. In the German Democratic Republic the number of persons sentenced by the courts has fallen by 48.6 % between 1949 and today: in West Germany the rate rose by 22.8 % in the period between 1949 and 1953 alone.

"If you compare these figures, you will agree with me when I say that it is very difficult for us to accept instruction from West Germany on this subject. West Germany is not only standing in a glass-house, but also in a nauseous bog."

SPY GOES EAST — WITH HIS SAFE

A German who has served for many years with the Military Intelligence Detachment of the American Forces in West Germany has just surrendered to the authorities of the German Democratic Republic, Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl announced to the People's Chamber on May 29th.

"As a proof of his good faith, he brought with him the safe of his espionage organisation, complete with all the secret files" the Prime Minister stated. The safe contained, in addition to important papers, many in English, a large collection of blank identity documents, including no fewer than 1000 blank official West German press identity cards.

As a result of lists which had become available the security forces of the German Democratic Republic had been able to arrest, in the past few days, 137 paid agents of American intelligence working in the Republic, Prime Minister Orotewohl announced.

Socialist Countries Coordinate Their Plans

Representatives of all the Socialist countries in Europe met in East Berlin from May 18th to 25th to coordinate their economic plans for the coming five year period. The Council for Mutual Economic Aid, which called the meeting, consists of all the European People's Democracies, together with the German Democratic Republic and the Soviet Union. For the first time a meeting of the Council was attended by observers from Yugoslavia and the Chinese People's Republic.

Important decisions were taken at the meeting on a division of labour in many important branches of industry. Member states will in future specialise more than hitherto in the production of certain goods of which they have most experience, particularly in the fields of machine tools, fine mechanics and optics. There will be a large increase in the exchange of electric power between member states.

Democratic Germany Calling

The German Democratic Radio now provides a regular daily service of news and views from the German Democratic Republic. Times of transmission are 8 p. m., 9.30 p. m. and 10.30 p. m. GMT.

The wavelengths are:
30.83 metres, 9730 kilocycles,
41.96 metres, 7150 kilocycles,
49.06 metres, 6115 kilocycles.

London Archeologist Honoured

Professor V. Gordon Childe, famed Australian born archeologist who is Professor of Prehistoric European Archeology at London University, has been elected corresponding member of the German Academy of Sciences in East Berlin.

8-POINT UNITY PROGRAMME

East German Proposals for Relaxation

Representatives of both states in Germany should meet to discuss all questions raised by both sides, the People's Chamber of the German Democratic Republic proposed on May 29th.

At the same time the People's Chamber gave its full approval to an eight-point programme, aimed at immediate relaxation of tension in Germany.

This programme made the following proposals:

1. The two German states should pledge themselves not to introduce conscription, and reach agreement on a limitation of armed forces.

2. Both governments should urge, jointly or separately, a ban on the stationing of atom-cannon and other atomic weapons on German soil.

3. The Governments of both German states, together with the administrations of East Berlin and West Berlin, should make a joint protest against limitation of sovereignty implied by the existence of foreign espionage centres in West Berlin.

4. The persecution should cease of organisations in West Germany and West Berlin which are anti-militarist, democratic and which serve the cause of international friendship: legal proceedings against members of these organisations should be discontinued, and those imprisoned should be released.

5. All militarist and neo-fascist organisations in West Germany and West Berlin should be banned, and the administration and judiciary should be purged of nazi and anti-semitic elements.

6. The Governments in both parts of Germany should protect peace, relaxation of tension and understanding by passing similar legislation aimed at the punishment of war propaganda and racial hatred.

7. Both Governments should declare their readiness to do all in their power for the further development of trade, cultural and scientific relations between the two halves of Germany.

8. Every encouragement should be given to personal contact between the members of elected bodies, parties and organisations in both parts of Germany, and parliamentary delegations should be exchanged.

. . . W. German Reply

On May 30th, one day after the East German People's Chamber had made its new bid for relaxation, the same theme was debated in the West German Parliament.

A large part of the debate was occupied by provocative attacks on the German Democratic Republic, and no speaker took up the initiative of the People's Chamber.

There was, however, a noticeable advance towards a more conciliatory attitude in some of the speeches. In previous West German parliamentary debates on this subject, speakers of all parties have been at pains to emphasise that they would "never under any circumstances" consent to talks with the authorities of the German Democratic Republic, which they chose to regard as non-existent.

In the debate on May 30th, however, speakers for all parties, with the exception of Chancellor Adenauer's Christian Democrats, pointed out that the East German Government did in fact exist, and that some sort of technical contacts must be established with the East German authorities if any progress was to be made on the relaxation of tension in Germany.

The Social Democratic Party presented a resolution calling for various steps towards relaxation of tension, such as an end to the "witch hunt" against books and newspapers from East Germany, the establishment of technical contacts with the East German authorities in the fields of trade, transport, culture and education, and "more humane" treatment of political prisoners in West Germany. The resolution was referred to the Commission for All-German Questions for further consideration.

Speakers of all parties suggested that political prisoners in West Germany, whom a Social Democratic speaker referred to as "victims of the cold war", might well be pardoned as a contribution to the general relaxation. No action was taken on this proposal.

United Press reported from Bonn on May 30th that official West German statistics showed that there were 471 political prisoners at present in the gaols of the West German state.

Special Trains for Church Rally

The railway authorities of the German Democratic Republic will provide special transport for Protestants living in the German Democratic Republic who want to attend the Evangelical Church Rally being held at Frankfurt/Main, West Germany, in July, it was announced in Berlin on May 29th.

The President of the Evengelical Church Congress, Dr. von Thadden-Trieglaff has assured the East German authorities that steps will be taken to see that espionage agencies will not be allowed to harass East German delegates during the rally, and that nothing will take place at the rally which might prejudice all-German understanding.

At previous church rallies held in West Germany delegates from East Germany have often been exposed to the unwelcome attentions of recruiting agents for western espionage organisations.

Bishop on Books

Evangelical Bishop Otto Dibelius praised the high standard of literature published in the German Democratic Republic at a meeting in East Berlin to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Evangelical Publishing House there.

"I must emphasise, as I have done in the past, that the picture of literary production in the German Democratic Republic is much cleaner than in many western countries" Bishop Dibelius said. "Young people here are spared the flood of trash and filth which has such serious moral consequences in other countries. I should like to express the heartfelt thanks of the Evangelical authorities for this fact."

YOUTH FORUM IN EAST BERLIN

Questions on Automation, Queen Elizabeth, Theatres

Every few weeks hundreds of young people come together in one of the big halls in East Berlin to cross-examine high government officials and party leaders on anything they like. Below we present a few of the questions asked and the answers given at the Youth Forum held on May 9th. After all the questions had been answered — and there were over sixty of them, dealing with everything from international politics to fashions — most of the participants remained behind for the dance which traditionally follows the Forum. On this page we present a few of the questions asked and answers given.

Question: Have there been any recent successes in developing diplomatic relations with western countries?

Answer (by Hermann Axen, prominent official of the Berlin district Socialist Unity Party): The German Democratic Republic has trade treaties and agreements with 150 capitalist countries, including France, the Scandinavian countries, Belgium, Holland, the South American countries, and the former colonial countries. Cultural contacts and exchanges are also developing.

Establishment of diplomatic relations depends upon the attitude of the western countries to the German Democratic Republic. The fact that they do establish trade relations with us shows that they are forced to acknowledge facts. The time will come when one western country after another will acknowledge the German Democratic Republic both politically and diplomatically. The decisive moment will be that in which western countries abandon their policy of blockade and non-recognition — a policy which is bound to collapse in the face of present developments.

Question: What are we to understand by the expression "industrial revolution" in the German Democratic Republic?

Answer (by Hermann Axen): The signs of this industrial revolution will be, first, the peaceful use of atomic energy and electronics. An Atomic Institute is being set up in the Republic. The use of radio-active isotopes, delivered to us partly by the Soviet Union and partly produced by our new institute, has already begun.

In the audience

(Sketch by Vontra from "Junge Welt", Berlin)

The second important development is in the field of mechanisation, automation and modernisation of industry and agriculture. By the end of the Second Five Year Plan in 1960, about 80 per cent of agricultural labour will be mechanised. This is not only a technical question; it will also mean a revolution in the cultural habits of our people.

Second answer (by Professor Gerhart Eisler, journalist): By 1960 our industrial workers will be putting in considerably fewer working hours, but although they will be working less, they will still get the same wages, which will in fact be worth 30 per cent more in real wages.

We must mechanise and introduce new working methods, so that we can produce more goods for the benefit of the working people. This can only happen in a socialist country. Look at England, for instance, where a huge strike has broken out in a big agricultural machinery and tractor works just because the capitalist owners want to introduce automation. Three thousand workers will be thrown out of work through this automation. Only in a socialist country can automation be a blessing and not a curse to the workers.

Question: But what happens to the workers, when as a result of mechanisation etc., fewer and fewer workers are needed?

Answer (by Professor Eisler): The workers will stay where they are, for we want to go on building new works and increasing production. Another of our aims is the shorter working day, which can only be introduced as a result of mechanisation and automation. We want to achieve a higher standard of living, and there are no outside limits to this, so that we must produce more and more goods to satisfy everybody's needs. Thus workers will always have enough to do here. The more automation, mechanisation and technical progress we achieve, the more we can extend our factories with the labour power which has thus been released. And we can go on in this way even when we have reached the stage where everyone's needs are satisfied — the stage we call Communism.

Question: I have heard that there are two world youth organisations. Can you tell us what the differences are between them?

Answer (by Joachim Herrmann, editor of the youth newspaper "Junge Welt"): The world youth organisation to which west European and overseas youth organisations belong is called the WYAA. It also has millions of members, although not quite so many as the World Youth Federation to which we belong. Meetings between the two organisations have been held recently to find out how far it is possible to work together. The Secretary-General of the WYAA visited Budapest and the talks seem to be taking a positive turn. It would be a good thing if all-German youth relations were developing as well as international relations.

Question: What were the results of the visit of Bulganin und Khruschov to England? How do you explain their visit, as Communists, to the Queen of England?

Answer (by Hermann Axen): First of all, this was the first time since the second World War that Soviet statesmen have visited England and negotiated at top level on important questions in a friendly atmosphere. The result has been that both states have expressed themselves in favour of peaceful co-existence; both states have expressed themselves in favour of limitation of armaments, and that Great Britain shares the view of the Soviet Union on the Near East. Thus two world powers have declared their determination not to allow the Near East to become a new starting-point for war, now that this danger in the Far East, in Korea and Vietnam, has been overcome. Finally agreements were reached on economic, cultural, sport and scientific-technical exchange.

The reception of the Soviet statesmen by the English queen is also a sign of the changing balance of power. It is a sign that the policy of co-existence has also found its way into Buckingham Palace. Representatives of a foreign country visiting another country are customarily honoured by the representative of that country, whether President or Queen. The pearls in the crown of Great Britain have not grown bigger, nor has the anti-monarchist attitude of Marxists been shaken by this visit.

Question: How is it that young people cannot see the same plays in the theatre that they study in school — like "Egmont", "Kabale und Liebe", for instance?

Answer (by Joachim Herrmann): But you can see "Kabale und Liebe" in the children's theatre, and there is no law against young people seeing "Egmont".

Sceond Answer (Hans Modrow, Free German Youth official): On the other hand, according to the Youth Protection Law, young people are not allowed to take part unaccompanied in some categories of entertainment after 9 p.m. I think visits to such theatre performances should be made an exception, so that young workers and high school students can be in the theatre alone after 9 p.m. We request Herr Abusch to help get this change made.

Alexander Abusch, (Deputy Minister of Culture): I must say, I do not see the justification for this regulation. It must of course be altered. I shall see that something is done about it.

EAST GERMANY'S PROGRESS

— A Hostile Witness Speaks

The West European "Council of Europe" held a special session in West Berlin on May 26th at which various West German experts held short lectures on the state of affairs in East Germany.

All the speakers were quite openly hostile to the regime in the German Democratic Republic, but several of them were forced to admit reluctantly that some progress had in fact been made in various fields. We present below excerpts from the address delivered by one of these hostile witnesses, the economist, Dr Franz Rupp, on the economic situation in East Germany: this reprint naturally does not imply that GERMAN REPORT identifies itself either with Dr Ruff's figures or his conclusions:

"The economy of the Soviet Zone (German Democratic Republic, ed.) makes considerable progress from year to year: it is recovering und becoming more productive. Perhaps some of you will be surprised that I start with this flat statement. I do it purposely, because I believe that it is quite wrong do close one's eyes to material successes just because one dislikes the means used to attain them.

"Western reports on conditions and events in the Soviet Zone are often rather one-sided. Of course the living standard of the population is regrettably low: simple things like paper and nails are short, important foodstuffs are still on the ration card, potatoes are short, shoes are bad and expensive . . .

"It would be easy to present a long list of such shortcomings: but it would be simply a selection of negative aspects. A collection of single truths does not always correspond to the whole truth. We can see this from an example which is much more important than the Soviet Zone. All the criticisms which we see or hear about the Soviet Zone applied earlier, or still apply today to the Soviet Union: despite this the Soviet Union has become the second greatest industrial and military power in the world."

(Dr Ruff then analysed the statistics on the fulfillment of the first Five Year Plan 1951—55, pointing out that in many important branches of industry the original plan targets had not been reached. The relevant statistics were published in full in GERMAN REPORT dated April 13th 1956.)

"Now of course it is not necessary to devote too much attention to the fact that an ambitious plan has not been fulfilled in all particulars. Industrial production has certainly not risen 90 % in the past five years, as the Socialist Unity Party claims, but I judge it may have risen by 60 %. This is a very considerable achievement when it is considered that the Soviets dismantled at least half of the total industrial capacity . . . and that in addition they took a high tribute from current production until the end of 1953. (Dr Ruff is referring to reparations payments to the Soviet Union, which only amounted to a very small percentage of the damage done by the German armies in the Soviet Union during the war, ed.)

"If all this is taken into consideration, it is impossible to reach another conclusion than that which I reached: the economic progress made in the past few years has been very considerable . . .

"The population of the Soviet Zone receives on its ration cards limited quantities of foodstuffs at very cheap

prices ... Those in the Soviet Zone who do not earn much are able to buy at least a minimum of foodstuffs at very cheap prices ... But all in all foodstuffs, clothing, household goods and so on are about half as dear again as in West Germany, despite the cheap butter and meat on the ration cards. Since rents, gas, electricity, fares, and various other things are cheaper in the Soviet Zone than in West Germany, the difference in the cost of living is not so large as when retail prices alone are considered. But taken all in all, people living in the Soviet Zone must spend 40 % more in East Marks than the West Germans in West Marks if they want to reach the same standard of living."

(Statisticians in the German Democratic Republic dispute Dr Ruff's conclusions on this point. In addition it must be pointed out that he has completely neglected to take into consideration the "invisible" benefits received by the worker in East Germany: much better social insurance and sick pay; very cheap holidays; free university education and keep for all talented young people, particularly the children of workers; nursery schools; equal pay for women, and dozens of other factors.)

"Technically the economy of the Soviet Zone is backward, despite remarkable achievements in some fields. But there can be no doubt that a considerable improvement is on the way, even though it may be limited for the time being to only a few branches of industry.

"The possibility of this development should not be regarded lightly, particularly since the cooperation between the economics of the East-Bloc states is becoming ever closer. The economic plans have been coordinated with each other, so that a certain division of labour between the various areas is possible. This brings with it the possibility of specialisation, with all its advantages, and means that in the whole area it is possible to utilise to the full the advantages of mass production for a huge market: this is something which is very important in the age of automation."

"New York Times" Takes a Good Look

The "New York Times" reported on May 23rd that industrial production in the German Democratic Republic was increasing rapidly. Correspondent Meyer Handler, reporting from Bonn, West Germany, stated:

"Shipping from Baltic ports tends to confirm the view that the economic recovery of East Germany has at last hit its stride.

"The economy of the Communist Zone has political implications for the future of Germany as a whole that are not lost on West German industrialists ... The expansion of the Baltic ports as outlets for goods and raw materials produced in the satellite states is only one bit of evidence that the period of economic stagnation of East Germany is coming to an end.

"Industrial leaders in West Germany have been in possession of information for some time that industrial production is improving quantitatively and qualitatively in East Germany. They believe that this factor can no longer be ignored in the political struggle for the whole of Germany.

"Both German governments, East and West, are engaged in active skirmishes in which the one or the other hopes to get the jump on its rival over the question of reunification of Germany ...

"According to West German observers, the tactics of the East German leaders are to force the Bonn Government into high-level political talks.

"Such talks would imply recognition of the East German regime and might eventually lead to reunification on the basis required by the Soviet Union: coexistence of a Communist East Germany and a capitalist West Germany inside a federal state headed by a central government with virtually no power to govern."

(GERMAN REPORT adds: Mr. Handler seems surprised at the economic recovery of the German Democratic Republic. He should read GERMAN REPORT more regularly; then he would have been able to write about the same subject years ago. But better late than never.)

Luther House Re-opened

Martin Luther's house in Eisenach, East Germany, has been re-opened after thorough renovation. The house is today the site of a museum showing some of the earliest printed Bibles, and Luther's translation of the Bible with his own hand-written emendations.

Book Review

"The Changing Germans" by Paula Wiking. Lincolns-Prager, London, 12/6.

Although Germany is generally recognised to be one of the sore spots of world politics today, and although there are two German states, the East German state, the German Democratic Republic, has been almost completely ignored by writers and publishers in Britain and America.

On my bookshelves I have dozens of books published in the last two or three years purporting to tell all about Germany today, but on examination it turns out that most of them devote almost all their space to the West German Federal Republic, and brush off the German Democratic Republic in a few pages, and mostly very inaccurate pages at that.

Now at last a British publisher has produced a book devoted entirely to the German Democratic Republic, written by Paula Wiking, an American born journalist living in London. Her name will be familiar to many readers of GERMAN REPORT, for we reprinted last year a number of articles on the Republic which she wrote for "The National Herald" of Lucknow.

Now she has written a book based on her experiences when she visited the Republic in 1954 and again in 1955, and a very good book it is. In her introduction she states: "It is not my purpose to expound general principles or theories, except in so far as this is necessary to explain my point of view, nor does the book pretend to be an exhaustive study of every aspect of East German life. It is simply a reportage of what we saw, of the conversations we had with a large number of persons in every walk of life, and of what seemed to us to be the changes going on in their lives and minds. Of course we saw the factories, schools, collective farms and new blocks of flats, but always the growing, changing things interested us most. It is this fluidity, so characteristic of a new society, that I have tried to capture in these pages."

And as far as I can judge she has captured a picture of this new Germany very well. Anyone who wants to get some impression of what life in the German Democratic Republic is like should read this book.

But I must add one criticism. Since the material in the book is so enthralling, it is a pity that the publishers could not see to it that the book was worthily printed and bound. In its present form it is no credit to British book production.

THE SAAR, GERMAN UNITY, AND NATO

"Le Monde" Interviews Foreign Minister

The German Democratic Republic must be consulted before any lasting solution of the problem of the Saar can be achieved, Dr. Lothar Bolz, Foreign Minister of the German Democratic Republic, has told the Berlin correspondent of the Paris "Le Monde" in an interview.

Foreign Minister Bolz had already written to French Foreign Minister Christian Pineau to this effect on May 5th, and on the same date Prime Minister Grotewohl had notified Chancellor Adenauer and the Saar Premier Hubert Ney that the German Democratic Republic wished to be consulted on the solution of the Saar question.

In his interview with "Le Monde", Foreign Minister Bolz also dealt at length with problems connected with the reunification of Germany, and West German membership in NATO. The main points from this important interview, which defined the policy of the German Democratic Republic on a number of pressing problems, are given below:

Question: *What is the object of your letter to M. Pineau on the Saar question?*

Answer: My letter points out that no all-German question can be settled without the participation of the German Democratic Republic. The Government of the German Democratic Republic has repeatedly expressed its willingness to negotiate on all questions — including the Saar question. To ignore this willingness is to impinge upon the rightful claims of the German Democratic Republic, based on international law. Furthermore, it is a basic principle of foreign politics to deal with realities, which means, in this case, the actual existence of two German states.

One-sided negotiations on the Saar question are also a contradiction of the obligations undertaken by France and other states towards the German people. The German people, like all other European peoples, have a right to security against German militarism and fascism. The Paris Treaties have acted contrary to this in that they sanction the revival of militarism in West Germany. Now the Saar region is also to be drawn into the sphere of resurgent German militarism.

Question: *What do you intend to do in order to bring about a rapid reunification of Germany? Are you, for instance, prepared to limit armaments if West Germany does the same?*

Answer: The reunification of Germany depends upon definite external and internal conditions. Our government has warned against the revival of German militarism and its inclusion in one-sided military pacts. It has again and again come out in favour of an all-European collective security system and for closer relations between the two German states. General disarmament would of course help remove the obstacles which stand in the way of German reunification.

Our government is also in favour of a controlled zone of restricted armed forces and armaments in Europe, with participation of both German states and of Germany's neighbour states. We have submitted proposals to the West German government and have stated our willingness to discuss at any time the reduction of armed forces in both parts of Germany.

Question: *After reunification will West Germany be able to free itself from its obligations towards the NATO states, and will the German Democratic Republic be able to do the same with regard to the Warsaw Treaty?*

Answer: A peaceful and democratic Germany is impossible so long as West Germany is bound by its obligations under the NATO treaties and the Western European Union. The overwhelming majority of the German people is against one-sided military pacts. To bring about the withdrawal of West Germany from NATO it would only be necessary for the Federal Government and its allies to bow to the will of the people.

As to the membership of the German Democratic Republic in the Warsaw Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance, signed on May 14th 1955, Prime Minister Grotewohl's statement, approved by all treaty member states, has made it clear that a reunified Germany will not be bound by military treaties and agreements entered into by one part of Germany before reunification.

Question: *You know that there is concern in France that a reunified Germany could constitute a source of danger to its neighbours. Are you prepared to support the active participation of Germany in a security pact for all Europe?*

Answer: A reunified Germany could only be a danger to Europe if the German militarists' dream of bringing all Germany under their rule again should come true. But the progressive forces in Germany, especially the peace-loving German Democratic Republic, will prevent this.

The only threat to the security of Germany's neighbours is West German rearmament. The West German Federal Republic has replied to proposals for reduction of armed forces and armaments with plans for setting up a 500,000-man NATO army and a 500,000-man militia.

A united, peace-loving and democratic Germany would put an end to this dangerous development, would not be dominated by revanchist and militarist elements and, within the framework of a security pact, would contribute to peace and security and to genuine economic and cultural co-operation between all peoples.

The German Democratic Republic has repeatedly expressed itself in favour of an all-European collective security pact, which the two parts of Germany first, and later a united Germany, could join.

Question: *There are plans for a neutralisation of Germany. Do you believe that neutralisation could include all Europe, if European security were guaranteed by the United States and the Soviet Union?*

Answer: I believe we should concentrate all our efforts on disarmament measures, on the dissolution of militarist blocs and on the creation of a system of all-European security. These are realisable aims and also adequate steps towards establishing lasting peace on our continent.

In a collective security system Germany would have the same rights and undertake the same duties as all other states.

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

A reader in Australia wants to know how split Berlin functions. In detail he asks: "This supposed iron curtain: does it melt? The trains must run through it, or do they? What of the buses? Do both sides drink from the same wells? What of gas, sewers, electric power, telephones, municipal services? Are sporting functions open to the whole city? What of shopping; is anyone barred from the bargain sales?"

Living here in this curious divided city I have got used to its illogicality and oddness: but this letter brought me up with a start. Probably most readers do not have a very clear idea of how things actually function here today, so I must try to explain. A bit of history is necessary first, because there have been a number of stages in the story of post-war Berlin.

In July 1945 British, French and American troops moved into Berlin, to take over sectors of the city from the Soviet Army, which had been solely responsible for the defeat of the nazi troops holding the city. Each of the four occupying powers was simply allotted a number of the boroughs of the city to occupy, which means that the borders between the sectors run zig-zag, sometimes down the middle of a road, sometimes along the edge of a pavement, and sometimes right through houses. In at least one case the old borough boundary runs along the lines of house frontage, so that householders living in the American sector find themselves in the East sector as soon as they step over their front doorsteps.

Up until the summer of 1948 Berlin was administered as a unit by a German city council under the control of the four-power allied Kommandantura. There was a certain amount of friction, as was almost inevitable, but Berlin was still one city, with trams criss-crossing the sector lines, unified gas and electricity services, and so on.

In summer 1948, however, the western allies carried through a unilateral currency reform in West Germany, without coordinating their step with the Soviet Military Administration; and after a few days of uncertainty they also introduced the West German Mark as the legal currency in West Berlin, against strong Soviet protests. The Soviet authorities objected that the introduction of this currency in West Berlin would inevitably lead to the splitting of the city, and subsequent events have proved how right they were.

With West Berliners being paid in West marks, and East Berliners being paid in East marks, and with no coordination between the values of the two currencies, the city rapidly fell into two halves. After a few weeks of confusion the situation solidified with separate German administrations established in East and West Berlin, neither of which recognised the other.

For the next four years or so the history of Berlin was the history of the gradual severing of links. West Berlin built a big new power station so that it should be independent of electric power from the east; other municipal services were split too, though there are a number of cases in which border areas get their supplies "from the other side of the line".

But good sense on both sides has preserved the unity of at least some transport services. The elevated electric railway and the underground railway still run throughout Berlin, making no distinction between East and West. The only difference is that if you buy your underground ticket at a station in West Berlin it costs you 25 West Pfennigs (fares have gone up in the West), and if you buy it at a station in the East it costs you 20 East Pfennigs (fares have remained stable in the East.)

Telephone communication between the two halves of the city has also been disrupted since 1952. Both sides blame the other for the breach: an examination of the arguments on this subject would fill a whole page, and readers would be little the wiser for it.

The question of shopping is also a complicated one to explain: to understand the position you have to realise that the two halves of Berlin have two different currencies, with completely different values in the international money market.

West Berliners can buy "cheap" East marks at exchange booths in their sector: until a few years ago they could spend these East marks freely in East Berlin. Then the East Berlin authorities realised that these "cheap" East marks were being used to buy up all sorts of products which are in short supply here, and banned West Berliners from buying most goods in East Berlin shops. In practice this is the same as the British ban on the importation of more than five pounds in cash by persons coming from abroad: this is done in order to stop people from importing "cheap" pounds purchased on the free market in Switzerland or elsewhere. Since there is no proper frontier between East and West Berlin it is impossible to stop the import of such "cheap" currency, so it is necessary to stop people using it in the shops.

Which brings us to the question of the frontier through Berlin. First of all let us make it quite clear that there is no barbed wire on this frontier. It is simply marked by signs saying "You are now leaving the Democratic Sector", or "You are now leaving the American Sector" as the case may be: and if you take an underground train from one side to the other you do not even see these notices.

If you drive across by car, or cross on foot, you may be stopped, on both sides of the border, by customs officials who want to take a look in the back of your car, or in any parcels you are carrying, to see if you are smuggling valuable goods across. That is all.

Looking back over what I have written above, I fear I have given only a very sketchy idea of what split Berlin is actually like. Perhaps readers can best envisage the situation if they think of their own town or city split in half, with separate city councils for East and West, separate currencies, no telephone communications, but with some means of public transport still connecting the two halves. People in the west would still go to visit their friends and relations in the East, and vice versa: football fans would still cross from one half to the other to see a good match: theatre goers would still go to see a good show in whichever half of the city it was staged.

That is the situation in Berlin today. Recently the East Berlin authorities have made a whole series of proposals for sitting down together with their opposite numbers in West Berlin to restore more normal conditions: to get the trams running across the border again, for instance. So far the West Berlin authorities have always flatly rejected these proposals. But with the growing strength of the idea of co-existence everywhere else in the world it seems rather silly.

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